CONFERENCE connection
Alabama · Georgia
Mississippi · South Carolina · Tennessee · NW Florida
SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

March 1, 2021

Recognizing the Anniversary

Grace to you and peace! This month is the one-year Anniversary of the pandemic and the closing of in-person worship for most of our churches. It is important to pause and recognize the impact that this past year has had on our clergy and our church members.

Pastors have worked harder than ever, carrying the concern for church members and communities in their hearts. Hospital chaplains, pastoral counselors, counselors in educational settings, and others have dealt with the pressures of addressing the mental and spiritual health of patients, clients, family members, and staff often through technology as opposed to in-person care. First Responders – doctors, nurses, EMTs, and other emergency personnel – have worked tirelessly to keep people alive and hopefully well.

Read Char's full pastoral letter on our website.

News from the Conference Office

Winter 2021 Grant Applications Due March 3

In July 2009, we launched the **Transforming Churches - Transforming Lives** campaign with the goal of raising money that would help carry the Southeast Conference into a new phase of growth and renewal, building on the remarkable progress achieved during the prior decade. For the last number of years, we have been in the distribution of funds phase of the campaign.

For the Winter 2021 grant cycle, applications are due by **March 3, 2021.** There are a few steps to keep in mind before applying:

- If you **have been awarded a grant in the past**, please make sure your "Project Evaluation Form" has been completed and submitted. This form can be found on our website. This is necessary and needed before your application can be considered.
- Please read and follow the guidelines (these can be found on the application form).
- **A detailed budget** should be submitted with the application. This is most important.
- If at all possible, please submit your application **before the deadline date.** That allows for any questions or concerns to be addressed prior to the deadline.

If at any time you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Generosity Coordinator Carrole Moss at cmoss@secucc.org.

Yearbook Reporting: It's Not Too Late!

If you have not completed your church's Yearbook reporting you can submit it before this Friday, March 5th. Details can be found here on the Southeast Conference website.

Last Call of Annual Information Review

If you have not already completed your Annual Information Review either online or by sending in the hard copy form, please do so today here on our website**.** All forms are needed by this Friday, March 5th.

SEC Annual Meeting is June 18-19, 2021

Look for upcoming news about the Conference Annual Meeting which will be held virtually this year. The meeting will include Friday evening worship; Saturday workshops, business, and worship; as well as other options being explored for the evenings prior to the Annual Meeting. Keep alert for future postings!

Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders

- **Monday, March 22, 7 pm Eastern/6 pm Central**With more people being vaccinated and Spring on the horizon, questions are being asked about how soon churches might return to in-person worship and what current practices need to be maintained into the future. We invite all Moderators, Church Leaders, and Clergy to be part of the conversation. REGISTER

Clergy Zoom Connections for March

- **An Hour of Conversations and Prayer**
  Tuesday, March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - 11:00 a.m. Eastern (10:00 a.m. Central); Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/479440102
- **Live Harp Meditations for Ministers**
  Thursday, March 18- 12:00 p.m. Eastern (11:00 Central)
  20 minutes of meditation with Celtic harp. Silent prayer and reflection following if desired, facilitated by Rev. Jean Norton. (For questions or to sign up for individual Therapeutic Harp Sessions, contact Jean at HeartSongJean@gmail.com.)
  Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/96976838422
- **Especially for Specialized Ministers**
  Tuesday, March 23, 2021 - 9:30 a.m. Eastern (8:30 a.m. Central)
  Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/354744689

Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2021. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of March 7

- Rehoboth Fellowship; Atlanta, Georgia
- UCC National Staff
- Valerie Coe Lowder
- Kriss (Mi Young) Choi
- Timothy Garvin-Leighton
- James Janecek

Week of March 14

- First Congregational UCC; Atlanta, Georgia
- Common Global Ministries and all mission personnel
- Thomas Baird
- Robert Foreman
- Cheryl Slusser
- Gavin Warren

Prayer Concerns

- **Rev. Dr. Kenneth Samuel** and family on the passing of his brother (Albert Samuel Jr.) from COVID 2/15/21.
- **Rev. Salome As-Salaam** and family on the passing of her mother
  The SEC Search Committee as they discern candidates for the position

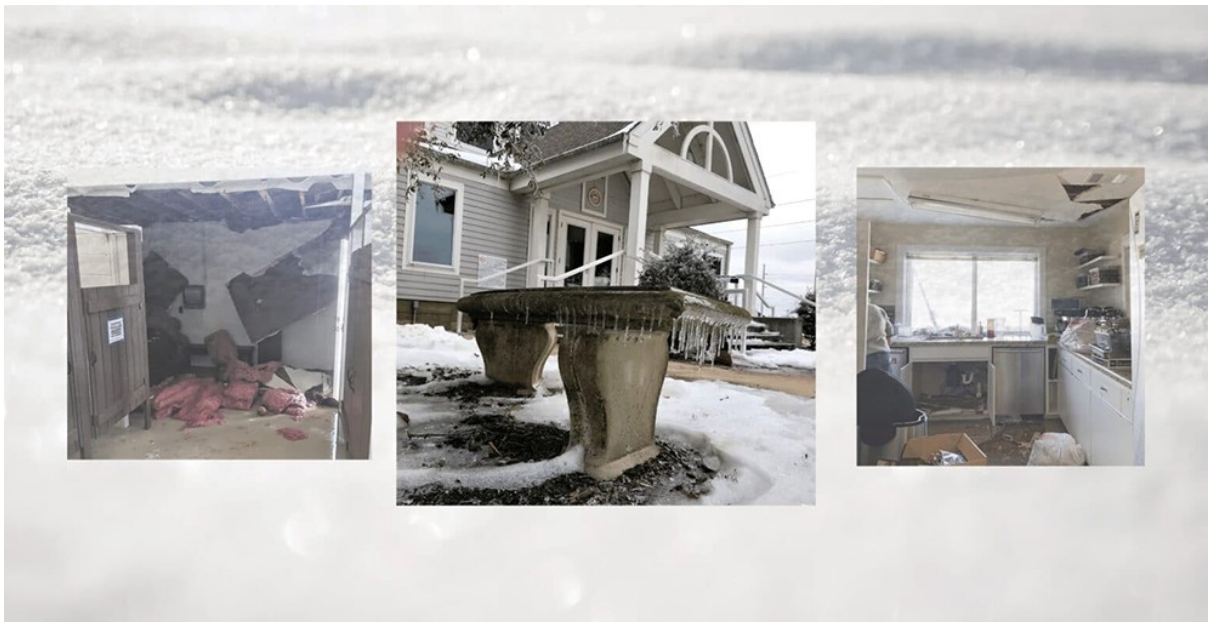
of Southeast Conference Minister.

- We mourn the passing of the **Rev. Leslie Floyd Carmack** who died Feb. 25, 2021. He had been living in Dadeville, AL. Rev. Carmack was born in 1934; was a graduate of Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and ordained in the Southeast Conference in 1960. He organized a new church start, Bonanza UCC whose name was eventually changed to Trinity United Church, Jonesboro, GA. He served that church for 29 years. Rev. Carmack was active in the Conference, serving as Moderator 1983-86 as well as various Committees. He also served as an Annuitant Visitor for the UCC Pension Boards after his retirement. Rev. Carmack was known for his strong stand for racial equality and strong support for missions and outreach. He was married to Jerri Pemberton who passed away last year. They had 3 children.

Churches in Transition

First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Rush Memorial, Atlanta GA; United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville TN

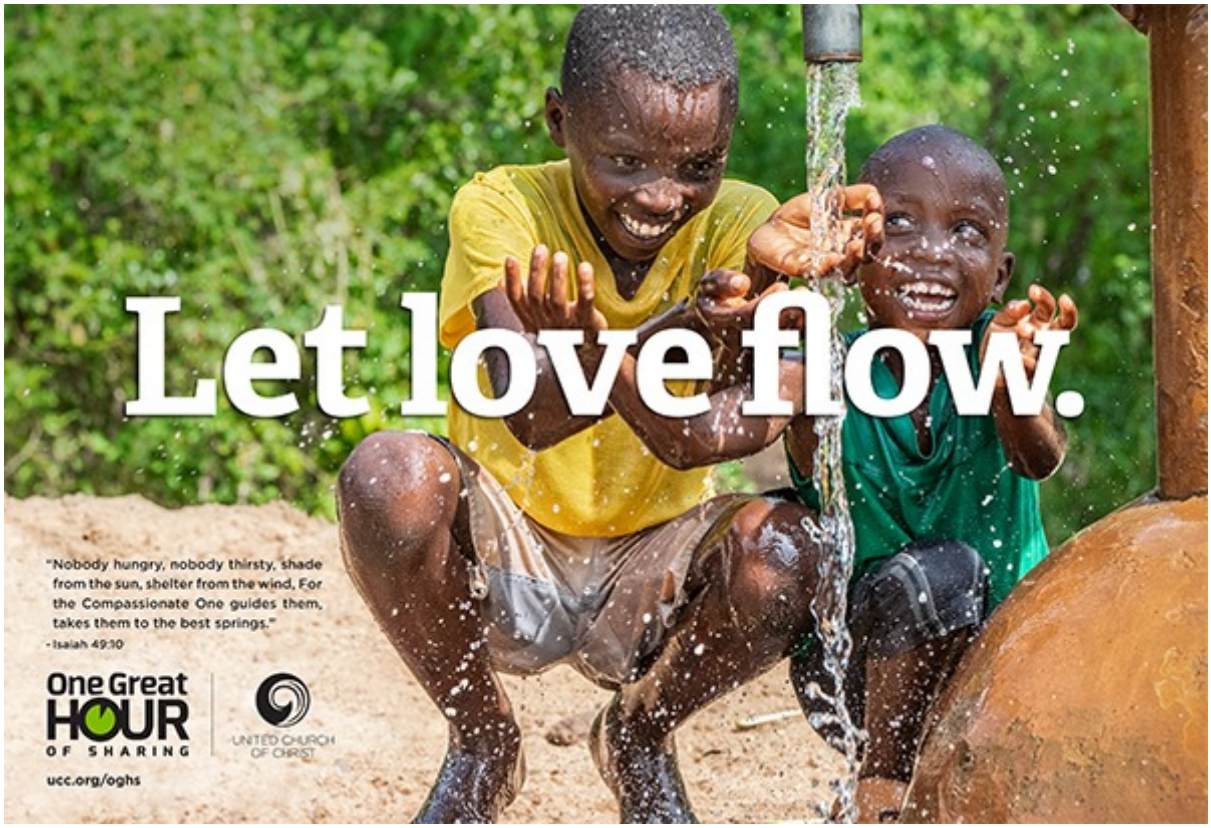
News from the Wider Church



UCC Issues Appeal in Response to Winter Storms

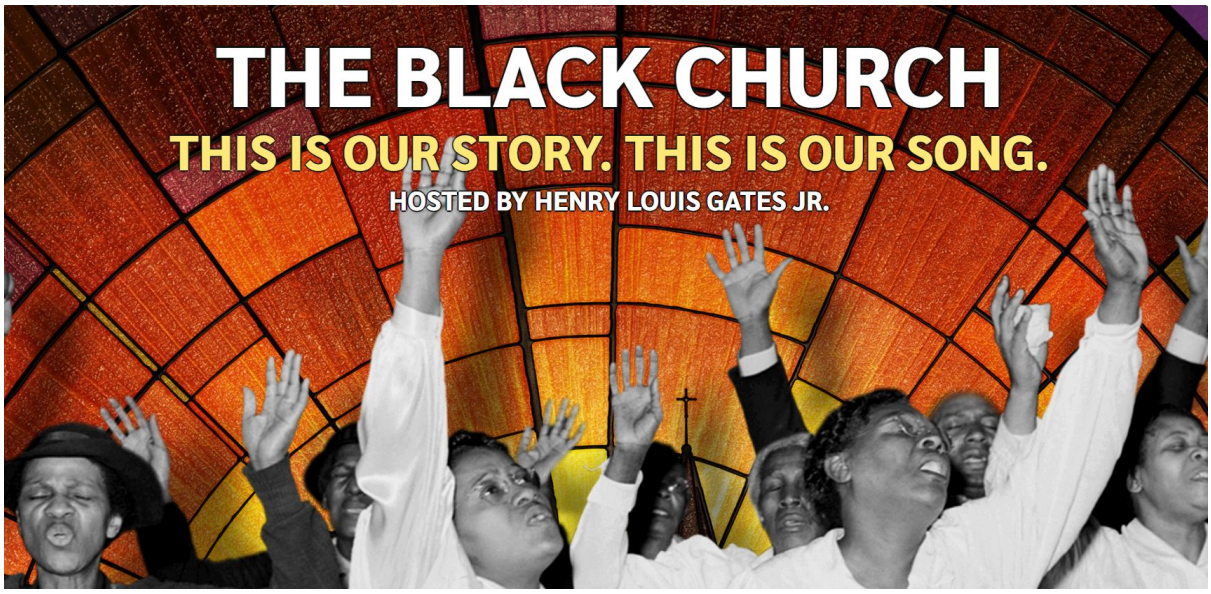
The UCC has issued an emergency appeal to assist the people dealing with the aftereffects of the storm in Texas and beyond. Donors should designate

gifts to the 'Emergency USA' fund here. "With the loss of electricity and freezing temperatures we continue to be concerned for those who are affected," said UCC Associate General Minister the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson. "We want to assist our churches as they provide food and shelter for those in their communities. This appeal will assist to provide immediate needs in the aftermath of these devastating storms."


Let love flow.
"Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty, shade from the sun, shelter from the wind, For the Compassionate One guides them, takes them to the best springs."
-Isaiah 49:10
One Great HOUR OF SHARING
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
ucc.org/oghs

One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing® (OGHS) is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. OGHS is at work all around the year, all around the world - sharing resources and changing lives. The UCC works with domestic and international partners, to provide support to health, education, refugee, agricultural, and emergency relief initiatives. The suggested offering date is March 21, 2021 (or choose any date in Lent). 2021 OGHS denominational resources are available online here.



SEC Represented in "The Black Church" Series

If you saw the recent PBS Series "The Black Church: This is Our Story, This is Our Song" hosted by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., you may have noticed some familiar faces and even places. The Rev. Dr. Dwight Andrews and The Rev. Dr. Andrew Young were interviewed in the series which included some filming at First Congregational UCC, Atlanta. Other UCC individuals involved included The Rev. Traci Blackmon (Associate General Minister of the UCC), Bishop Yvette Flunder (City of Refuge UCC, Oakland, CA); The Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright (previous pastor of Trinity UCC, Chicago) and The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III (current pastor of Trinity UCC, Chicago). If you have not seen the series, check PBS for future opportunities or watch it online!

A Sure Foundation Resource

A Sure Foundation is a wonderful booklet with resources that address the relationship between pastors and congregations. There is information about Pastoral Relations Committees; How to Assess Ministry; Social Media Guidelines; Sabbaticals; Ethics for Departing Pastors; Ethical Codes and Behavioral Covenants for congregations. It can be purchased for $5 from United Church Resources.

Local Church News

Invitation to the Installation of Rev. Dr. Shelli Poe

Safe Harbor Family Church and the Southeast Conference's Commission on Ministry is excited to invite members of the Southeast Conference to the Installation of Rev. Dr. Shelli Poe as the Pastor of Safe Harbor Family Church in Clinton, Mississippi. You are invited to join Safe Harbor's **6:00 pm CDT service on March 14, 2021 by Zoom.** To attend, please RSVP here and you will receive the Zoom link a couple of days before the service.

Rev. Dr. Shelli was ordained in 2007 with the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and received privilege of call in the United Church of Christ in 2010. Prior to her call to pastor at Safe Harbor, she served at Pilgrim Congregational Church (Warren, NJ), Sojourners United Church of Christ (Charlottesville, VA), and at Safe Harbor as Theologian in Residence and Director of Christian Education.

Shelli holds a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of Virginia. She is a Visiting Professor at Iliff School of Theology and an Affiliated Scholar at Millsaps College.

Campfire Church in Mississippi

Safe Harbor Family Church has been meeting in person for worship in a

unique way: via "Campfire Church." They ask their congregants to wear their masks, bring a chair, and bring their own snacks and sticks to roast something over the fire. They then hold a brief communion and prayer service by the roaring fire. For those who grew up going to church camp, it probably brings back wonderful memories!

Trainings and Conferences

Healthy Boundaries 101 and 201 Offered

The Commission on Ministry is finalizing dates for this year's Healthy Boundaries training, with these courses scheduled so far:

- HB 201 scheduled for March 6 and March 13 (learn more)
- HB 101 scheduled for April 30 and May 1 (learn more)

More details are on our website: https://www.secucc.org/news-and-events/healthy-boundaries-workshops/

Active Shooter Preparedness Webinar

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency invites you to join a two-hour security webinar to enhance awareness of and response to an active shooter event.

Preparing employees for a potential active shooter incident is an integral component of an organization's incident response planning. Because active shooter incidents are unpredictable and evolve quickly, preparing for and knowing what to do in an active shooter situation can be the difference between life and death. Every second counts.

Please note this active shooter preparedness training is for member denominations affiliated with Insurance Board. As a member, you will have priority access to sign up for the training as there are only 150 spots available per training session. Ministries are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible to secure your spot.

THURSDAY, MARCH 4th 2021 @1:00pm EST (Details and Register)
FRIDAY, MARCH 12th, 2021 @1:00pm EST (Details and Register)

Job Openings

Part-Time Music Director in Marietta, GA

Pilgrimage UCC in Marietta, Georgia is seeking a part-time Music Director / Accompanist. The PUCC music style is traditional and includes gospel hymns, supplemented by some folk and jazz compositions. Congregational singing is primarily led using the UCC's New Century Hymnal; therefore, familiarity with the Hymnal is important. The music director works with the Ministerial Staff, with oversight by the Worship Committee. Work is reviewed through observation, supervisory evaluation, and committee and congregational feedback for effectiveness.

The full job description and list of requirements is available from the church. For more details or to apply, please send your resume to the Hiring Committee at pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com with the subject line ("Part Time Music Director/Accompanist Application").

Conference Calendar

January 20 - March 3
Spring 2021 Grant Applications Open

March 2 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EST
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

March 9 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EST
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

March 11 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EST
Board of Directors Meeting

March 14 @ 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm CDT
Installation of Rev. Dr. Shelli Poe

March 16 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

March 18 @ 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm EDT
Live Harp Meditations for Ministers
March 18 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm EDT
Commission on Ministry Meeting

March 22 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT
Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders

March 23 @ 9:30 am - 11:00 am EDT
Zoom Conversation for Specialized Ministers

View the **full calendar** of events online: https://www.secucc.org/events/

Contact Us

Conference Minister: **Rev. Char Burch;** cburch@secucc.org

Assoc. Conf. Minister: **Rev. Heather Fosburgh;** hfosburgh@secucc.org

Generosity Coordinator: **Min. Carrole Moss;** cmoss@secucc.org

Director of Communications: **Don Harris;** dharris@secucc.org

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